

Message Text

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EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TO TEXTS NBRD PARA THREE)

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JA, KS, KN

SUBJ: GOJ ASSESSMENT OF ROK-JAPAN DIFFICULTIES

REF: SEOUL 5846

SUMMARY: FONOFF BRIEFED US ON GOJ ASSESSMENT OF ROK-JAPAN DIFFICULTIES AND JAPAN'S PLANS. PM TANAKA RELUCTANTLY AGREED TO SEND LETTER TO KIN JONG PIL EARLY NEXT WEK BUT LETTER DOES NOT INCORPORATE ALL "SUGGESTIONS" FROM SEOUL. JAPANESE CONCERNED RUPTURE IS POSSIBLE. END SUMMARY.

1. FONOFF (FIRST NE ASIA DIV ASIA DIV DIRECTOR SEO) BRIEFED US EVENING SEPT 6 ON ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS, GOJ ASSESSMENT, AND PLANS. ROK INFORMALLY IN PAST FEW DAYS MADE FOLLOWING PROPOSAL. GOJ SHOULD SEND HIGH LEVEL ENVOY, SATO, OHIRA, OR SHIINA, TO SEOUL WITH PERSONAL LETTER FROM TANAKA TO PRESIDENT PARK CONTAINING FOLLOWING ELEMENTS: A) RECOGNITION OF JAPAN'S INVOLVEMENT WITH PLST ASSASSINATE PRES PARK; B) PROMISE OF CLOSE COOPERATION IN THOROUGH INVESTIGATION OF OF INCIDENT C) CORRECTION OF KIMURA STATEMANT ON "THREAT FROM NORTH", D) BANNING OR, AT LEAST SUPRESSING CHOSEN SOREN.

2. SEO SAID THERE WERE SEVERAL FACTES OF PROPSAL WHICH COULD NOT BE SATISFIED. A) SUGGESION THAT LETTER BE FROM TANAKA

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TO PARK (A SUGGESTED ONLY RECEIVED SEPT 5) WOULD BE INAPPROP-
RIATE. TANAKA HAD RECEIVED LETTER FROM PREMIER KIM JONG PIL

AND SHOULD RESPOND TO HIM RATHER THAN PARK. KIMURA TOLD DIET COMMITTEE TANAKA LETTER WOULD GO TO KIM JONG PIL AND, THUS A CHANGE WOULD BE POLITICALLY EMBARRASSING TO GOJ. B) ROK SUGGESTED THAT CONTENTS AND WORDING OF LETTER BE NEGOTIATED. SEO SAID IT WAS UNACCEPTABLE THAT PRIVATE LETTER FROM PRIME MINISTER OF ONE COUNTRY TO HEAD OF ANOTHER GOVERNMENT BE NEGOTIATED. CONTENTS COULD BE MADE KNOWN BEFORE HAND BUT NOT NEGOTIATED. FURTHERMORE, SHOULD IT BECOME KNOWN TANAKA'S LETTER HAD BEEN NEGOTIATED, POLITICAL FUROR COULD BRING DOWN CABINET. C) INTENSIVE GOJ STUDY HAS CONCLUDED THAT CHOSEN SOREN CANNOT BE BANNED. GOJ HAS NO EVIDENCE OF KIM- HO-RYUNG, MT YSOHII, NOR CHOSEN SOREN INVOLVEMENT IN PLOT AND EVEN EVIDENCE EXISTED THERE IS NOT LEGAL BASIS FOR BANNING CHOSEN SOREN. ON OTHER HAND, IF EVIDENCE IS FOUND WHICH IMPLCATES YOSHII, KIM HO-RYUNG, AND OTHER OFFICIALS OF CHOSEN SOREN IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITY, ANY OR ALL COULD BE PROSECUTED AND JAILED. CHOSEN SOREN COULD, THEREBY, BE EMASCUALTED. GOJ WILL MONITOR CHOSEN SOREN'S ACTIVITIES MUCH MORE CLOSELY IN FUTURE AND REGULATE ITS ACTIVITIES AS CLOSELY AS LEGALLY POSSIBLE. SEO SAID THAT CHOSEN SOREN WAS VERY ACTIVE POLITICALLY BUT RECENTLY ITS RESORT TO TERRORISM, SUCH AS BOMBING POLICE BOXES, HAS CEASED. ONLY SHOULD IT BE DETERMINED THAT CHOSEN SOREN WAS CONSISTENTLY UNDERMINING AND LIKELY IN THE FUTURE TO REGULARLY DISRUPT JAPAN'S STABILITY, WOULD IT BE LEGALLY POSSIBLE TO BAN CHOSEN SOREN. THIS IS NOT NOW THE CASE.

3. SEO SAID PM TANAKA WAS VERY ANGRY WHEN ROK PROPOSAL WAS MADE TO HIM. FONOFF STRENEOULDY URGED TANAKA TO RESPOND AND HE FINALLY AGREED. LETTER TO KIM JONG PIL, RATHER THAN PARK, WILL START WITH WARM AND VERY SINCERE RE-EXPRESSION OF TANAKA'S CONDOLENCES OVER DEATH OF MADAME PARK. IT WILL EXPRESS REGRET AND THOROUGH COOPERATION IN INVESTIGATING PLOT AND PROSECUTION FOR ALL CRIMINAL ACTIVITY LETTER WILL SAY IT IS INTEREST OF PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENTS OF ROK RELATED TO PAST. SEO SAID LETTER WOULD NO MENTION CHOSEN SOREN, BECUASE THERE IS NO EVIDENCE IMPLICATING THE ORGANIZATION. SO ADDED THAT IT WOULD ALSO BE POLITICALLY EXPLOSIVE TO MENTION CHOSEN SOREN. KIMURA'S "THREAT FORM NORTH" WILL NOT BE MENTIONED. FINALLY, NO HIGH LEVEL ENVOY WILL

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DELIVER LETTER.

4. WHEN IDEA OF LETTER WAS FIRST BROACHED WITH TANAKA, IT WAS THOUGHT THAT LETTER DELIVERY WOULD BE HELD UP PENDING FURTHER THOUGHT THAT RESULTS OF GOJ INVESTIGATION. AS RESULT OF INVESTIGATION, LETTER COULD PERHAPS BE MORE FORTHCOMING. BUT NEW URGENCY WAS INTRODUCED IN SITUATION WHEN GOJ LEARNED-- AND SEO STRESSED EXTREAME SENSITIVITY OF FOLLOWING--THAT IF JAPAN'S RESPONSE WAS UNSATISFACTORY TO SEOUL, ROK AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN WOULD BE RECALLED TO SEOUL TUESDAY, SEPT 10, AND

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS MIGHT PERHAPS BE BROKEN, THIS INFORMATION DID NOT COME FROM SEOUL (PRESUMABLY FROM ROK EMBASSY TOKYO) AND SEO SSUSPECTS INFORMING GOJ WAS A PERSONAL INITIATIVE, WHICH WILL BE SENT EARLY NEXT WEEK BUT PERHAPS NOT BEFORE TUESDAY.

5. SEO SAID SITUATION WAS FRAUGHT WITH POLITICAL DYNAMITE AND COULD BRING DOWN GOVERNMENT. THOSE INVOLVED IN GOJ ARE UNDER INTENSE PRESSURE, EXACERBATED NOW BY SEOUL'S ARBITRARY DEADLINE, TO RESPOND IN WAY WHICH PACIFIES SEOUL AND DOES NOT BRING DOWN GOVERNMENT IN PROCESS. SEO SAID GOJ HAD TRIED TO COOPERTATE IN INVESTIGATION BUT SEOUL'S IMPATIENCE DEFIES JAPAN'S DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. IN FACE OF SEOUL'S REPEATED PROVOCATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL SLANDER, GOJ HAS TRIED TO ACT IN RESTRAINED FASHION AND BELEIVES THAT IT HAS.

6. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, SEO SAID TREATY BUREAU DIRGEN MATSUNGA'S REMARKS IN DIET ON GOVERNMENTS IN KOREA (IN WHICH KIMURA CONCURRED) REPRESENTED NO CHANGE IN GOJ POSITION AND WAS FORMULATIONS USED BY GOJ SINCE 1965. SEO VOLUNTEERED THAT TIMING OF STATEMEN, DURING CURRENT DISPUTE WAS UNFORTUNATE. PRESS REPORTS OF KIMURA'S REMARKS ABOUT "DEEPENING CULTURAL, SPORTS AND TRADE RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA" WERE MISLEADING. KIMURA'S POSITION ON RELATIONS WITH NK WAS SAME AS OHIRA'S AND NO CHANGE WAS UNDER CONSTRUCTION.

7. IN CONCLUSION, SEO EXPRESSED REGRET HE HAD BEEN UNABLE TO KEEP US MORE FREQUENTLY INFORMED BUT INTENSE DISCUSSIONS HAD ONLY NOW RESULTED IN DECISIONS. HE SAID HE HAD SPOKEN CANDIDLY ON VERY SENSITIVE MATTERS BECAUSE OF OUR CLOSE

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RELATIONS AND OF OUR SERIOUS MUTUAL CONCERN OVER DEVELOPMENTS.

8. COMMENT: SEO'S REMARKS WRERE REPEATEDLY LACED WITH DEEP CONCERN OVER HOW TO DEAL WITH A DILEMMA, THE DENOUMN OF WHICH HE CLEARLY FEARS COULD BE DIPLOMATIC RUPTURE AND EVEN FALL OF TANAK'S GOVERNMENT. HE IS NOT SURE, HOWEVER, HOW FAR SEOUL IS GOING TO PUSH THE CRISIS. ALTHOUGH WE ALSO CANNOT ASSESS ROK'S INTENTIONS, IF DIPLOMATIC RUPTURE OCCURS TANAKA'S POSOTION COULD BE SEVERELY TESTED.

LIMITED QTE GIVE UNQTE IN TANAKA'S REPORTED RESPONSE TO ROKG DEMANDS NOT ONLY REFLECTS ANGRY SURFACE EMOTIONS THAT WE ARE TOLD CHARACTERIZED TANAKA'S FIRST REACTION. IT IS ALSO UNDERSCORED LIMITATIONS ON HIS FREEDOM OF ACTION IN DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONTEXT. THE LEVERAGE IN ROK HANDS FOLLOWING GOJ RESPONSE IN ANY EVENT, APPEARS LIKELY TO BE POTENT. HODGSON

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